PRAYER AS THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE OF DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS

READING *AL-FATIHAH* WITH *GAYATRI, METTA*, *DAO*, *SHEMA*, AND *PATER NOSTER*

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In every corner of the earth, man looks up and speaks to something he believes is higher than himself—not just out of fear, but out of a longing for meaning. They take different forms: an exclamation, a praise, a mantra, a song, or a long silence. But from all of them, the same common thread emerges: **the awareness of a single source of life that is sacred and completely unreachable by words.**

In Islam, that consciousness takes the form of *Al-Fātiḥah* — the opening seven verses called *um al-Kitāb*, "the mother of the holy book." It is recited in every rak'ah, repeated hundreds of times every day, as if it were the spiritual beat of the ummah. However, the echo of its meaning goes beyond religious boundaries. When we hear it with universal human ears, *Al-Fātiḥah* speaks in the same language as the ancient prayers of various civilizations.

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1. Praise and Cosmic Consciousness: "Rabb al-'Ālamīn" and "Savitar"

The second verse *of Al-Fātiḥah* states:

"Al-ḥamdu li-Llāhi *Rabb al-'Ālamīn*" — all praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

Rabb al-'Ālamīn*'s concept* here affirms God as the **Sustainer of all beings**, not just the God of one nation or religion. In ancient Hindu texts, *the Gayatri Mantra* calls for:

"Tat Savitur vareṇyam, bhargo devasya dhīmahi, dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt."

The two, despite being born in different lands and languages, vibrate at similar frequencies. "Savitar" is the mover, the giver of life; The "Rabb" is the arbiter and guide. One emanates from the metaphor of sunlight, the other from the love relationship between the servant and his Lord. But both declare: **there is one force that upholds the order of nature, animates and inspires.**

In the context of religious anthropology, it denotes *ecocosmic consciousness* —the recognition that the entire reality (earth, air, sky; *bhur, bhuvah, swah*) are rooted in a single source. Like *'ālamīn* in the Qur'an, the "three worlds" in the Gayatri mantra are not merely physical spaces, but rather symbols of the layers of human existence: physical, mental, and spiritual.

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2. Prayer as a Request for Guidance

The middle part *of Al-Fātiḥah* reads:

"Iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'īn. Ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm."" Only to You do we worship, to You alone do we ask for help. Show us the straight path."

This sentence is not a dogma, but an existential plea — human humility in the face of a higher reality. The same tone appears in the Gayatri mantra:

"May He enlighten and inspire our thoughts."

In the *Buddhist Metta Sutta*, that guidance appears in the form of universal love:

"Sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhitattā — may all beings be happy."

The difference lies in theology, but the similarity lies in the **direction of prayer itself: toward enlightenment, love, and harmony.**
Al-Fatihah asked for "a straight path", Gayatri asked for "enlightenment of the mind", Metta asked for "the happiness of all beings". All three, in contemporary terminology, are expressions of spirituality that transcend denomination—they speak of **the union between God's will and human virtue.**

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3. The Unspoken Word: Tao and the Name of Allah

In *Dao De Jing*, the sacred text of Taoism, the opening states:

"Dao ke dao, fei chang dao. Ming ke ming, fei chang ming."" The Way that can be explained is not the Eternal Way; the name that can be called is not the true name."

Here Laozi reveals a paradox: **that the supreme reality cannot be fully explained.** In Islam, this principle is reflected in the *phrase Bismillāh* — "In the name of Allah", which signifies that all human speech and action must be subject to the Name that surpasses all names.

Anthropologist Mircea Eliade calls this *hierophany* — an event in which the sacred expresses itself, but can never fully possess human language. Like "Om" in Gayatri, "Dao" in the Laozi text, or "Allah" in Al-Fatihah, every religion has a word that **symbolizes the awareness of man's limitations before the Infinite.**

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4. Purification and the Path of Truth

In Shinto, *Ōharae no Kotoba* is recited to cleanse the world of impurity:

"When Izanagi purified himself in the Tachibana river, the Great Purifying Gods who cleansed the world were born."

Purification in this tradition is cosmic and moral, like *ṭahārah* in Islam." The "straight path" in *Al-Fātiḥah* can also be understood as the path of purification — not only from sin, but from ego attachment.

Guidance, enlightenment, and purification are one and the same spiritual movement: **to be holy not because they are detached from the world, but because they live in harmony with their source.**

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5. Monotheism Across Traditions: Shema, Pater Noster, and Fatihah

In *Shema Yisrael*, the Jews cry out:

"Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad — God is our God, God is One."

In *the Pater Noster* (Our Father's Prayer) Christians pray:

"Our Father in heaven, glorify thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done."

And in *Al-Fātiḥah*:

"Māliki yawm ad-dīn — The Owner of the Day of Retribution."

All three speak in the **language of relationships**, not just metaphysics. God is not only the source of energy, but *the One who loves, hears, and guides*. In Abrahamic theology terms, this is called *relational monotheism* — the oneness that lives in a relationship of love.

If in Hinduism God is the inner light, in Buddhism it is compassion without form, in Taoism it is the Way, in Shinto it is the sanctity of nature, then in the Abrahamic tradition, God is **"You"** — the second pronoun that opens up an intimate dialogue between man and the Creator.

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6. Prayer as Ethical Awareness

In Zoroastrianism, *Ahuna Vairya* reads:

"As God is a ruler to be obeyed, so the ruler of the world must act according to the truth."

This prayer contains an ethical core that is in line with Islam: **submission to the Divine will must radiate into social justice.**
Similarly, *the Sikh Mantra Mūl*:

"Sat Nām Kartā Purakh Nirbhau Nirvair — His Name is Truth, He is fearless and hateless."

Prayer is not just a word; it is a moral foundation.
A person who recites *Al-Fātiḥah* but oppresses is the same as a person who recites *the Metta Sutta* but rejects love. All true prayer ultimately leads to a change of self and social structure for good.

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7. The Spiritual Unity of Humanity

The Bahá'í Prayer closes this series with a gentle sentence:

"Oh my God! Unite mankind in Your religion, make them united as one soul."

This call seems to answer the echo of *Al-Fātiḥah* who refers to God as *Rabb al-'Ālamīn* — the Lord of the whole universe, not just one community.
The unity of humanity here is not a theological utopia, but rather a logical consequence of the belief in a single source of life.

In the anthropology of religion, this phenomenon is called *convergent monotheism* —not that all religions are the same, but that all religious consciousness tends toward one universal center of meaning: **one source, many names; one reality, many paths.**

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8. Closing: Prayer as the Language of Light

From *Bismillāh* to *Om*, from *Sabbe Sattā* to *Dao*, from *Adonai Echad* to *Ik Onkar*, all of humanity's great prayers emanate one common consciousness:
that life comes from something greater than oneself, and that true happiness is when thoughts, words, and deeds are in harmony with that source.

Al-Fātiḥah can be read not only as an Islamic prayer, but as a **universal spiritual symphony**.
He calls man to know God as the Sustainer, to ask for guidance, and to walk the straight path—a path that in every language is called different, but leads to the same light.

"Ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm"— "Show us the straight path."

That sentence may be a common prayer for all mankind.

6. Jew – *Shema Yisrael*

Hebrew Text (Original):
שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד׃

Transliterations:
Shema Yisra'el, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad.

Translation:
"Hear, O Israel: Our Lord is one God."

Comparative analysis:
Shema is the core of Jewish monotheism just as **"Alhamdulillahi Rabbil 'alamin"** is the theological core of Al-Fatihah.
Both affirm God**'s oneness and power over all of nature**, as well as being the basis of ethics — from this recognition flows moral and spiritual obligations.

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7. Christianity – The Lord's Prayer

Greek Text (Original):
Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς·
ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου·
ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου·
Γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου,ὡς
ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς·
Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον·καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν,
ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν·καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν,
ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.

Latin Transliteration:
Pater hēmōn ho en tois ouranois, hagiasthētō to onoma sou, elthetō hē kingdom sou, genēthētō to thelēma sou, hōs en ouranō kai epi gēs...

Translation:
"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come; be thy will on earth as it is in heaven. Give us sustenance today; forgive us our trespasses as we have forgiven our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Comparative analysis:
This prayer is aligned with Al-Fatihah in almost all structures:

- *Our Father in Heaven* → **Rabb al-'alamin**

- *Hallowed be Thy name* → **Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim**
- *Give us sustenance today* → **Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'in** (supplication and devotion)
- *Show the straight ↔ path Be Thy will on earth as it is in heaven*

This prayer pivots to **the direct relationship between man and a loving God**, just as Fatihah combines **grace and guidance** in the form of universal prayer.

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8. Zoroastrian – *Ashem Vohu*

Avestan Text (Original)::

𐬀𐬭𐬎𐬌 𐬱𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀

𐬀𐬭𐬎𐬌 𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬨𐬌𐬚𐬌𐬨𐬌𐬎𐬌 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬌 𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬨𐬌𐬚𐬌𐬨𐬌𐬎𐬌 𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬌 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬌 𐬵𐬌𐬀𐬌 𐬀𐬱𐬀𐬌 𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬨𐬌𐬚𐬌𐬨𐬌𐬎𐬌 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬌.

Transliteration:
Ashem vohu vahishtem asti, ushta asti, ushta ahmai hyat ashai vahishtai ashem.

Translation:
"Truth is the best of all good. Happiness comes to those who are righteous for the sake of the truth."

This
prayer is a summary of Zoroastrianism's ethics — affirming that **Asa (Righteousness)** is God's primary attribute and the moral basis of man.
In line with *the Ihdinas siratal mustaqim* in Fatihah, Ashem Vohu directs humans on the **straight path of truth and spiritual happiness**.

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9. Shinto – *Norito of Great Purification (Ōharae no Kotoba)*

Japanese Text (Original):
天つ罪、国つ罪を祓へ給ひ清め給ふことを、
天つ神、国つ神、八百万の神たち、共に聞こし召せ。

Transliteration:
Ame no tsumi, kuni no tsumi o harae tamae kiyome tamae koto o, ame no kami, kuni no kami, yaoyorozu no kami-tachi, tomo ni kikoshimesu.

Translation:
"Take away the sins of heaven and earth, cleanse us. O the gods of the heavens, the gods of the earth, and the eight million gods, hear our pleas together."

Comparative analysis:
Shinto emphasizes **self-purification and cosmic harmony**.
Although polytheistic in nature, this prayer is functionally in line with *Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim – Maliki yaumiddin* in Al-Fatihah, which is **to acknowledge the existence of a holy power that purifies and weighs human deeds**.

General Synthesis

Spiritual Aspects	Islam (Al-Fatihah)	Hindu (Gayatri)	Buddha	Tao	Confucian	Jew	Christian	Zoroastrian	Shinto
God / Supreme Source	Rabb al-'alamin	Savitar	Impersonal (Dhamma)	Dao	Tian	YHWH	Father in Heaven	Ahura Mazda	We
The Essence of Prayer	Praise & Hints	Enlightenment	Universal Love	Harmony	Virtue	Tauhid	God	Truth	Sanctification
Spiritual Purpose	The Straight Path	Description of the Buddhist	Universal tranquility	Balance of nature	Social ethics	Faithfulness	Redemption	Moral truth	Spiritual purity

🔹 1. Prayer as a Universal Anthropological Phenomenon

Anthropologically, **prayer is a form of human communication with the transcendent**, an attempt to connect oneself with a power that is considered higher than oneself. Both in the *Gayatri Mantra* and *Al-Fatihah*, in the Jewish *Shema* and the *Lord's Prayer*, man always appears as **a being who is aware of his limitations and existential attachment to the source of life**.

Here, prayer is not just a theological ritual, but a **structure of human consciousness about the cosmos**. Mircea Eliade calls it an expression of *homo religiosus* — a human being who instinctively seeks to place his life in sacred order.
Thus, prayer is a "symbolic map" that shows how humans understand **the origin, direction, and meaning of their existence**.

🔹 Sec. 2. Prayer Structure and Cultural Cosmology

If we notice, almost all of these major prayers have a **tripartite structure**:

1. **Acknowledgment of divine sources** – such as "Rabb al-'alamin", "Savitar", "Adonai Eloheinu", "Ahura Mazda".
2. **Request for guidance or inner enlightenment** – "Ihdinas siratal mustaqim", "Dhiyo yo nah prachodayat".
3. **Hope for moral and cosmic well-being** – "Sabbe sattā sukhitā hontu", "Ashem vohu", "Harae tamae kiyome tamae".

From the perspective of symbolic anthropology (Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz), this pattern suggests that prayer works as **a liminal ritual** —a space in which man steps out of a profane life into a sacred

order to renew his consciousness.
It is **a moment of transition** from chaos to cosmos, from confusion to order of meaning.

🔹 Sec. 3. Monotheism, Phenotheism, and Monism: The Evolution of Divine Symbols

Al-Fatihah centers all reality on "**Rabb al-'alamin**" — one God who is the source and the destination. Interestingly, a similar theological structure is already present in **the Gayatri Mantra**, which mentions one *Savitar* as the source of the energy of the whole realm (bhur, bhuvah, swah).
Although in the Vedic framework it is still henotheistic (one God among many manifestations), anthropologically it leads to **functional monotheism**: the belief that behind many names and forms, there is **one divine source of light**.

In *Shema Yisrael*, Jewish monotheism takes an explicit form: "Our God is one God."
In Taoism and Buddhism, the concept of divinity shifts from the personal to **monism or non-theistic** — God is not a person, but a universal law (Dao, Dhamma).
Yet its spiritual function remains identical: prayer is **self-alignment with the highest principles**.

Anthropologists such as Ninian Smart consider this to be a pattern of "*transcendental unity of religions*": religions are different, but the basic orientation is the same—**seeking unity with the** Absolute.

🔹 Sec. 4. The Straight Path as a Universal Archetype

The sentence *"Ihdinas siratal mustaqim"* in Al-Fatihah is the key to reading interfaith prayers anthropologically. The motif of the "path" (path, mārga, dao, sirat) appears in almost every major tradition:

Tradition	The expression "Path"	Symbolic Meaning
Islam	*Sirat al-Mustaqim*	The straight path to God and the truth
Buddha	*Magga* (Eightfold Noble Road)	The path of enlightenment and liberation from dukkha
Taoism	*Dao* (Cosmic Path)	The natural principle that unites all existence
Confucianism	*Dao* (The Moral Path)	Human ethics under the sky
Christian	*"The Way" (Hodos)*	The way of salvation through love and faith
Zoroastrianism	*Asha* (Truth, cosmic order)	The path of virtue and light against darkness

In the anthropology of meaning, it suggests that **"path" is an existential archetype of human being** —a symbol of an inner journey that brings morality, spirituality, and cosmology together.
Prayer is a way to keep people **on that path**, not lost by lust, power, or inner darkness.

🔹 Sec. 5. Prayer as a Symbolic Language: A Post-Structural Analysis

When viewed with a post-structural approach (e.g. in the spirit of Derrida or Lévi-Strauss), prayer is a **network of signs** that compose divine meaning in a cultural context. The words "Rabb", "Savitar", "Dao", "Tian", "YHWH", "Ahura Mazda", or "We" are not theologically identical entities, but **signs that point to a common relationship**: the relationship of man with forces that maintains order and meaning.

Prayer, thus, functions like a text that **deconstructs the distance between the human and the sacred**.
He not only spoke of God, but **presented God in human language**. In Al-Fatihah, this is evident in its dialogical structure — "You are the one we worship, and to You we ask for help" — a direct relationship, without a mediator.

From the perspective of language anthropology, prayer becomes **a performative** act (Austin): by saying it, man is not only speaking about God, but **performing a sacred act** —he reaffirms his existence as a spiritual being.

🔹 Sec. 6. The Social and Moral Functions of Prayer

Durkheim views that what is "sacred" is essentially a **reflection of the collective values of society**. Prayer, in this case, is **a way for society to internalize its moral norms in religious symbols**. Thus, although Al-Fatihah, Gayatri, and Our Father's Prayer differ doctrinally, they function the same:

- To promote morality (honesty, love, truth).
- Uniting communities in recognition of a single source of value.
- Remind humans of their limitations and ethical responsibilities.

Thus, prayer becomes **a social tool to maintain a balance between the individual, the community, and the cosmos.**

🔹 Sec. 7. Anthropological Conclusions

Through the lens of religious anthropology, it can be concluded:

1. **Prayer is a universal language that connects man with the sacred order**, regardless of its theological form.
2. **The structure of prayer always reflects cultural cosmology** — whether it is personal (Abrahamic monotheism), impersonal (Buddhism, Taoism), or naturalistic (Shinto).
3. Within the differences between words and forms, there is **a uniform symbolic pattern**: confession – supplication – enlightenment.
4. The "Straight Path" in Al-Fatihah is the **cross-cultural archetype** of human consciousness of universal moral order.
5. Thus, interfaith prayer is not merely a variation, but **a universal manifestation of the human yearning for balance between the soul and the cosmos**.

🔹 1. From Anthropology to Theological Poststructuralism

Anthropology helps us understand prayer as a *universal cultural phenomenon*; while poststructuralism goes further—it asks: how is the **meaning of "God" shaped by language, symbols, and power relations in each culture?**

In *Al-Fatihah*, "**Rabb al-'alamin**" is not just the name of God, but the **absolute subject's position** in the structure of language — the source of meaning and moral purpose. However, in Gayatri, Savitar takes on the same semiotic function: "the moving," "the illuminating," "the transcendent." In *Dao De Jing*, the Dao plays the role of the supreme principle that is "nameless" but all-encompassing. In *Shema Yisrael*, YHWH is also not just a name, but **an absolute marker that refuses to be objectified** ("I am I").

Thus, *Rabb*, *Savitar*, *Dao*, *Dhamma*, *YHWH, Ahura Mazda* all serve as **transcendental markers that reject finality**, signs that indicate the "Unrevealable".

Derrida calls this *différance* — the meaning of God is always delayed, always in motion, and never totally present in language.
But it is precisely because of this that people pray: prayer becomes **a linguistic movement towards the unspoken**.

🔹 Sec. 2. The Language of Prayer as a "Movement Towards the Unspeakable"

In all traditions, prayer always moves between two poles:

- **Human language (which is limited),** and
- **Divine (unattainable) meaning**.

Prayer is the *liminal zone*, the border where human language seeks to summon the infinite. When Al-Fatihah said,

"Iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'īn,"
is not just a declaration of faith, but an **attempt to stabilize the symbolic relationship between the subject and the** Absolute.

Similarly, Gayatri:

"Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi" — we meditate on the holy light of God.The word *Dhimahi* (we meditate) shows that man cannot directly hold that light, can only **approach through reflection**.

The Buddhist text, "Sabbe sattā sukhitā hontu," does not mention God, but it nevertheless reflects the **same transcendental movement** — from the self to something beyond the self: universal love.

So poststructurally, **God is the effect of the language of prayer**, not the object.
Yet the effect is existentially real—it changes human consciousness, morals, and orientation.

🔹 Sec. 3. Power Relations in the Language of Divinity

Poststructuralism also reminds us that every mention of God's name contains a **power structure**. In *Al-Fatihah*, God appears in a hierarchical relationship: *'Abd* (the servant) speaks

to *the Rabb* (Ruler). In Confucian prayer, "Tian" is the moral sky that serves as a reference for the king — that is, prayer regulates the social order. In *Our Father's Prayer*, the "Father–Son" structure contains a relationship of love as well as authority.

Thus, the language of prayer is a **microcosm of symbolic power**: how man places himself in a value system that is believed to come from the Divine.
But on the other hand, prayer is also a **subversive act** — it can transcend the limits of worldly power by connecting man directly to the highest source of meaning.

Prayer in Islam, for example, is direct without a mediator: "To You alone do we worship." In Buddhism, even by eliminating the personal God, prayer becomes liberation **from the theistic system**; man takes his own inner path to become one with the universal law (Dhamma).

Prayer, then, is a **discourse about power and freedom** at the same time—God's transcendent power, and man's inner freedom to relate directly to the sacred.

🔹 Sec. 4. God as a "Sign That Unites Differences"

In a cross-religious semiotic perspective, we can read this structure:

Term	Tradition	Lexical Meaning	Symbolic Meaning
Rabb	Islam	Maintainers, regulators	The principles of moral order and love
Savitar	Hindu	Movers, light emitters	The cosmic energy that gives life to everything
Dao	Taoism	The way, the principle of the universe	The Order of Natural Harmony
Dhamma	Buddha	Cosmic law, truth	The way of deliverance from suffering
Tian	Confucian	Moral heaven	Source of ethical order and justice
YHWH	Jew	"I am I"	Infinite absolute existence
Ahura Mazda	Zoroastrian	God is wise	Truth and light against darkness
We	Shinto	Holy Spirit	Spiritual energy in everything

When viewed through the eyes of a poststructural theologian, all of those terms are **distinct signs pointing toward a single meaning: a supreme reality that transcends language**.

Each religion gives a different name to the unspeakable, but its function remains the same—**uniting man with a moral, cosmic, and spiritual order.**

In Derrida's language, this is a game *of différance* —God is always present and absent at once; each name reveals a part, conceals a part of the other.
But precisely because of this, man continues to pray: to negotiate God's meaning between the limitations of words and the depths of the mind.

🔹 Sec. 5. Deconstruction: From Dogma to Transreligious Consciousness

Deconstruction does not mean negating faith, but **opening faith to the plurality of meanings**.
Reading Al-Fatihah side by side with Gayatri, the Dhammapada, or the Our Father's Prayer is not relativism, but rather the **revelation of the layers of universal meaning** hidden behind the differences in dogma.

When *Al-Fatihah* said:

"Ihdinas siratal mustaqim — Show us the straight path,"
we can see its semantic echoes in *the Dhammapada* ("the path to enlightenment"), or in *the Dao De Jing* ("the unforced natural path").

The "path" here is not a single theological line, but **an existential structure of man**: every human being, in the context of his culture, seeks a path that leads to harmony with the highest reality.

Within this framework, *the straight path* does not belong to one religion—it is a **universal sign for man's awareness of his spiritual direction**.

🔹 Sec. 6. Poststructuralist-Theological Conclusions

1. **God is a living text** —it cannot be established in a single system of signs, but is lived through language, prayer, and moral action.
2. **Interfaith prayer is a network of signs that delay each other's meaning**, but they all lead to the same spiritual wholeness.
3. **The deconstruction of prayer** shows that divinity is not beyond language, but resides **in the way humans name and interpret**.
4. Each prayer is a **hermeneutical movement from the finite to the infinite** —from sound to meaning, from text to experience.
5. Thus, interfaith prayer is not just a comparative study, but a **universal hermeneutic experiment**: people from different cultures are talking to the same God, in different languages.

. Anthropological and Post-structural Readings of Universal Prayer

From the perspective of religious anthropology, prayer is a form of **symbolic communication** between humans and the transcendent. It is not just a spiritual call, but also a **cultural**

practice that constructs social relationships, identity, and morality. Comparatively, *Al-Fatihah*, *Gayatri Mantra*, *Metta Sutta*, Confucian, Daoist, and Shinto prayers show a universal pattern:

1. **Recognition of divine sources**,
2. **Request for moral guidance and inner enlightenment**,
3. **A statement of cosmic and social harmony.**

A. God as a Divine Motivating Source

In *Al-Fatihah*, God is called *Rabb al-'Alamin*—the Keeper of all nature. In *the Gayatri Mantra*, this concept is expressed with *Savitar*—the movers of the cosmos, the giver of energy and consciousness. In *the Tao of Te Ching*, the equivalent principle is *the Dao*—the way that is intangible but the source of all things. In Shinto prayer, *Kami* is a representation of the cosmic spirits who maintain the order of nature.

Anthropologically, this suggests that in almost all ancient and modern religious systems, man placed the **center of the moral and cosmic order outside of himself**, on a divine entity or principle. Thus, prayer serves as a **binding between the micro-cosmos (humans)** and **the macro-cosmos (nature and God).**

B. Prayer as a Mapping of the Cosmos

Bhur, Bhuvah, Swah in Gayatri is a three-level cosmological model: earth, air, heaven. *Al-'Alamin* in Al-Fatihah unites everything into a unity of reality that is controlled by God. In Buddhism, the concept of *Sabbe Sattā* ("may all beings") extends the scope of prayer beyond the human species; it signifies **cosmic inclusivity**.

Anthropologists such as Mircea Eliade and Marcel Mauss interpreted prayer as **a rite of restoration of order**, that is, a symbolic act to reaffirm man's relationship with the cosmic order. Every prayer, from Islam to Shinto, not only speaks to God, but also "reorganizes the world"—affirming the meaning, direction, and moral boundaries of life.

C. Prayer as an Ethical and Social Reflection

In Al-Fatihah, moral guidance is formulated through the sentence *ihdinaṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*—the straight path. In Gayatri, the form is *dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt*—may our minds be enlightened. In the Metta Sutta, the message appears as a desire for all beings to "live happily, free from hatred and suffering."

This ethical similarity indicates that prayer in every religion serves to shape **social character and collective moral awareness**. Clifford Geertz called it "a system of meaning embodied in symbols that affirm man's disposition to the world." In other words, every prayer is a **cosmic narrative of morality**, and every sacred reading is a map to living together.

D. Prayer Language and Meaning Structure

In a post-structuralist framework, the language of prayer cannot be separated from its cultural context. The word *Rabb*, *Savitar*, *Dao*, *Kami*, or *Sabbe Sattā* is not merely a label of God, but a **structure of meaning that lives** within the symbolic system of each culture. Derrida would say that the meaning of prayer is never singular: each mention of God calls out a network of other meanings—life, light, law, love, and harmony.

Thus, this cross-faith prayer comparison is not intended to standardize, but rather to **reread the linguistic diversity of the One**. Each is a "sign" that marks the same direction: the human longing for its origin, for the center of meaning that transcends time and space.

E. Prayer as a Bridge of Universal Monotheism

Viewed from the perspective of monotheism, all of these prayers show the same movement: **total surrender to one source of universal goodness.**

- In Islam, this unity is called *tawhid*.
- In Vedantic Hinduism, it is known as *Brahman*—the singular reality behind many names.
- In Taoism, it is called *the unspoken Dao*.
- In Shinto, it manifests in harmony with *Kami* which is rooted in the same source.
- In Buddhism, though non-theistic, prayer is still directed to **universal wisdom and compassion**, functions that in spiritual psychology are equivalent to orientation to the One.

Religious anthropologists see here **the universal structure of religious consciousness**, that people everywhere take a different path to utter the same thing: the plea that this life be in harmony with the highest source, which gives meaning, light, and peace.

5. Closing Reflection: Prayer as the Universal Language of Godhead

Prayer is the first language spoken by man when he realizes his limitations in the face of the mysteries of the universe. It is a **synthesis between fear and longing**, between weakness and hope. Each religion teaches prayer as a way back to the same origin—which in Islamic terminology is called *tawhid*, in Hinduism it is *called ekam sat* ("that one"), in Buddhism as *citta bhavana* (mental development towards wisdom), in Taoism as *wu wei* (integration with the universal path), and in Shinto as *makoto no kokoro* (sincerity of heart that is united with the harmony of nature).

Viewed through the lens of religious anthropology, this entire prayer represents a **universal monotheistic structure**, although it is expressed with various symbols, myths, and languages. In *Al-Fatihah*, man greets "The Lord of the universe"; in *the Gayatri Mantra*, he meditates on "the holy light of Savitar"; in *the Metta Sutta*, he invokes "happiness for all beings"; in *the Dao De Jing*, he surrenders to the "Unspoken Path"; and in Shinto prayers, he thanks "We who guard the world." But behind all these differences, there is one structure of common meaning: **the recognition of the presence of the single divine principle that sustains life.**

A. Prayer and the Consciousness of Universal Monotheism

Universal monotheism is not theologically equating God, but rather the **recognition that consciousness of the One has permeated all human culture.** Anthropologists such as Mircea Eliade have characterized this as the "sacred archetype"—the archetype of sacredness that emerges in all cultures. While from a post-structural perspective, each religion only articulates the "Unspeakable" through a different system of signs.

Al-Fatihah speaks of God as *Rabb al-'Alamin*, the keeper of the universe; *Gayatri* calls it Savitar, the source of the light of consciousness; *Metta Sutta* displays it as boundless compassion; *The Dao* reveals it as an unnamed cosmic path; while *Kami* in Shinto is the

embodiment of harmony that lives in nature. Thus, the prayers can be read as **expressions of functional monotheism**—that is, unity in purpose, although they differ in terms and image.

B. Prayer as a Mirror of the Human-Cosmos Relationship

When traced, prayer always affirms three relationships: **man with God, man with his neighbor, and man with nature.** In *Al-Fatihah*, this relationship is maintained in the structure of the verses: praise, devotion, and the request for moral guidance. In *Gayatri*, it is implied through cosmic meditation the three worlds—*bhur, bhuvah, swah*—that unite the elements of earth, air, and heaven. In Buddhism, *the Sabbe Sattā Sukhitā Hontu* prayer extends love to all beings. In *the Dao De Jing*, moral harmony is a reflection of the harmony of the cosmos. In Shinto, prayers are said to maintain purity of heart so as not to disturb the balance of nature.

Thus, **prayer becomes an ecological and social ethics as well as a metaphysical one.** He reminded humans that morality is inseparable from the order of nature and God.

C. Social and Cultural Functions of Prayer

Anthropologist Victor Turner views prayer as part of a *community*, a moment when humans feel unity outside of social structures. In every religion, congregational prayer—prayer, puja, chanting, or matsuri—becomes a vehicle **for the collective experience of transcendence**, which removes individual boundaries. Culturally, prayer binds communities in the realization that they share the same spiritual destiny and goals.

In a modern world fragmented by ideology, technology, and politics, interfaith prayer can be a **reflective space to restore humanity's sense of spiritual unity**. Not to erase differences, but to affirm that diversity is the face of oneness.

D. Post-Structuralism and the Relativity of the Language of Prayer

From a post-structuralist point of view, the meaning of "God" in prayer is not a static entity, but rather a **relational product of a sign system**. The words *Rabb*, *Savitar*, *Dao*, or *Kami* derive their meaning from the network of symbols and historical experiences of each culture. However, when all the words are juxtaposed, a new horizon emerges: the realization that all prayer languages are pointing to something beyond the language itself—an "unspeakable" that can only be permeated through inner experience.

Thus, prayer is not only vertical communication, but also **the deconstruction of language**, which is an attempt to go beyond the boundaries of words in order to achieve a deeper meaning.

E. Conclusion: The Mission of Prayer in Modern Human Consciousness

Thus, when *Al-Fatihah* is read side by side with *the Gayatri Mantra*, *the Metta Sutta*, the *Confucian and Daoist Prayers*, and *Norito Shinto*, we are witnessing a **spiritual map across civilizations**. All speak of light, straight paths, compassion, harmony, and divine guidance. All show that prayer is the **architect of human consciousness**, which builds the bridge between reason and mystery, between earth and heaven, between Me and the One.

Monotheism, in its deepest sense, is not merely a belief in one God, but **a recognition of a single source of meaning that animates the entire diversity of religious symbols**. So every prayer, whatever its language, is an echo of the same sentence—perhaps the most universal in human history:

"Lead us to light, straight paths, and peace."

Epilogue

"A Prayer That Unites Behind Many Names"

Man, from the beginning of his existence, has never stopped speaking to the heavens. He spoke in a changing language —from murmurs in ancient caves, to mantras, psalms, songs, to verses recited in houses of worship. But the content of the conversation is always the same: **the longing to understand where the light comes from and where the soul will return.**

In *Al-Fatihah*, man calls upon God the Most Merciful and the Most Merciful, asking to be guided to the straight path. In *the Gayatri Mantra*, man meditates on the light of Savitar so that his mind is enlightened. In *the Metta Sutta*, man ignites love for all beings. In *Dao De Jing*, he learned to be silent in order to be in tune with the eternal Path. In the Shinto prayer, he bows in gratitude to Kami who maintains the harmony of nature.
All of these prayers are like **different rivers but toward the same ocean** — an ocean of awareness that there is one source of life that is beyond the reach of words, but is always felt by the heart.

Prayer, for anthropology, is not just a rite or tradition, but an **existential action**. It turns fear into meaning, solitude into connection, chaos into order. In prayer, man not only speaks to God, but also rearranges himself before nature and others.

In a post-structural sense, every word in prayer is just a sign— *Rabb*, *Savitar*, *Dao*, *Kami* —all pointing to something that can never be fully explained. God is not a concept, but rather a presence that sneaks between words. So prayer is **a cosmic poem**, where language stops, and all that remains is silence that burns from within.

When the modern world separates man from the source of his meaning, prayer becomes a way to recall. It is not only a request, but also a recognition: that behind science, economics, and power, man is still a creature that listens to the subtle voices of the unseen.
Prayer transcends religious boundaries without erasing identity. It does not demand uniformity, but teaches the **rhythm of unity in diversity**. He reminded that every difference is just mirrors that reflect the same face.

If every human being, of any religion, recites this prayer with this consciousness—with the intention of upholding goodness, justice, and love—then the whole earth would become one holy place:
a place where *Rabb al-'Alamin*, *Savitar*, *Dao*, *Kami*, and *the Buddha's Inner Light* are no longer separate,
but are united in consciousness:

That God is One, but is
called by many names.

And perhaps, like the most ancient echo of the human heart,
we are all just praying in a different way:

"Guide us to the light,
to the straight path,
to the peace that unites all beings."

Very good — here I help compile an **academic bibliography** that is suitable for the SINTA 2 version of the article with the theme *"Prayer as the Universal Language of Godhead: Comparison of Al-Fatihah and Interfaith Prayer in an Anthropological and Post-structuralist Perspective".*

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Additional information (if the article is redirected to the SINTA 2 format):

- Include Arabic and Sanskrit references in the official transliteration according to *the Ministry of Religion's Arabic-Latin Transliteration Guidelines* and *IAST (International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration).*
- Add interpretive footnotes if quoting prayer verses or mantras, to conform to scientific standards.
- In the bibliography, ideally, use *the APA 7th edition* citation style or *Chicago style*, depending on the journal's requirements.